

Initial Steering Committee Work Plan

1/26 version

BACKGROUND

The Western Governors Association submitted a proposal in response to the United States Department of Energy's Funding Opportunity Announcement that set forth specific objectives and work for a Western State-Provincial Steering Committee (SPSC) in the areas of regional transmission planning, integration of variable renewable generation, and efficient use of the grid.

OBJECTIVES

Transmission planning: Develop sound interconnection-wide transmission plans that inform investment decisions and government policy decisions.

Integration of variable generation: Promote technological and institutional improvements that minimize the cost of integrating variable renewable generation while maintaining system reliability.

Efficient use of the grid: Evaluate and promote reforms to increase use of the existing transmission system with a stress on more efficient use of the existing system to move renewable power.

Better Integration of utility resource and transmission planning: Coordinate and participate in meetings of utility and state/provincial resource planners to improve utility resource and regional transmission planning.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Transmission planning
 - Provide input on electricity future scenarios, including non-wires alternatives
 - Provide input on transmission case studies
 - Identify costs, benefits, and environmental impacts of alternative electricity futures and corresponding regional transmission plans.
- Analyze and recommend region-wide actions to minimize the cost of integrating large amounts of renewable energy into the grid.
- Analyze and recommend policies to improve the efficiency of the grid
- Participate in forums organized by the Western Electricity Coordinating Council for utility and state/provincial resource planners

- Establish an effective process for state and provincial representatives to reach decisions on key inputs to the regional transmission plan developed by the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC)

TASKS

Transmission Planning

- Develop proposed scenarios to submit to WECC for transmission studies. (January 31, 2010)
- Develop comprehensive scenarios to be considered by the WECC Scenario Planning Steering Group (April, 2010)
- Recommend to WECC's Transmission Expansion Planning Policy Committee the models to use to evaluate transmission needs for a 20-year period. (June, 2010)
- Participate in development of a coordinated sub-regional transmission plan (June, 2010).
- Participate in WECC's Studies Work Group and related work groups to flesh out transmission study requests. (Start February 2010).
- Assess the impacts of technology change in resource and transmission planning (Start March 2010).
- Assess the total cost of scenarios – including capital and operating costs of new energy facilities, water, land, and wildlife impacts (September, 2010)
 - Evaluate water consumption, land, and wildlife impacts of alternative scenarios. (April 2011).
- Develop uniform regional assumptions for critical inputs to load forecasts such as energy efficiency, demand response, distributed generation, technology changes, and economic growth (January 2011).
- Identify costs, benefits, and environmental impacts of alternative electricity futures and related transmission plans. Analyze potential sensitivity to changes in policy, technology, load growth, and fuel costs. (June 2011).
- Facilitate discussions with outside experts on the strengths and weaknesses of analyses, the sensitivities of the study findings to key factors, and potential areas of improvement in future transmission planning. (June 2011)
- Evaluate and offer recommendations on draft regional transmission plans. (Date)

Integration of Variable Generation

- Develop comprehensive issue paper on current activities and proposed reforms to minimize costs of integrating renewable resources. Identify needs to institute reforms and the potential role of the committee . (March 2010).
- Participate in WECC's Variable Generation Subcommittee (VGS).
- Sponsor joint multi-jurisdictional hearings on the findings and recommendations of the Western Wind and Solar Integration Study (WWSIS). (June , 2010)
- Develop a coordinated strategy to implement recommendations of the WWSIS. (September, 2010)
- Identify opportunities to coordinate and scale forecasting services across the Western Interconnection (December 2010)
- Support execution of an interconnection-wide wind integration study. (July 2010).

Grid Utilization

- Assess and report on historic use of Western transmission paths.
 - Participate in WECC's Historical Analysis Work Group to improve path use analyses.
- Assess limitations of existing congestion management systems. Identify and evaluate all efforts to improve existing use of the transmission system.
 - Create web site on historic use information and reform efforts.
 - Hold webinars on historic use information and reforms.
- Monitor WestConnect/Columbia Grid/NTTG Joint Initiatives effort and assess obstacles, if any, to implementation of proposed reforms.
- Participate in development of a cost-benefit study of a new Southwest Power Pool-type congestion management system being evaluated by WECC.

Resource Planners' forum

- Work with WECC to organize the next interconnection-wide resource planners' meeting. (March 2010)
 - Develop meeting agenda.
 - Use planner's forum to evaluate scenarios to be considered.